



Documents and Source Material

16 FEBRUARY–15 MAY 2017

This section comprises *JPS*-produced summaries of international, Arab, Israeli, and U.S. documents and source materials from the quarter as well as an annotated list of recommended reports. Each summary contains a link to the original document.

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INTERNATIONAL

A. EU LEADERS, LETTER TO ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTRY DENOUNCING DEMOLITION OF EU-FUNDED HOMES, TEL AVIV, 4 APRIL 2017

What was to be a routine meeting between European Union (EU) diplomats and Yuval Rotem, the new director-general of Israel’s Foreign Ministry, erupted in heated discussion when Ambassador Lars Faaborg-Andersen presented him with a letter, signed by all 28 European member states, denouncing

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the demolition of Palestinian homes in Area C, the portion of the West Bank under direct Israeli control. The letter specifically named the Bedouin community of Khan al-Ahmar near the Ma'ale Adumim settlement, in part because Italy and other European countries helped fund structures there. "The practice of enforcement measures such as forced transfers, evictions, demolitions and confiscations of homes and humanitarian assets (including EU-funded) and the obstruction of delivery of humanitarian assistance are contrary to Israel's obligations under international law, including in particular provisions of the 4th Geneva Convention," the letter states.

[Read the entire article.](#)

ARAB

B1. HAMAS, NEW CHARTER, DOHA, 1 MAY 2017

On 1 May 2017, Hamas released in Arabic and English what analysts have referred to as a new Hamas charter. The "Document of General Principles and Policies" is an attempt to distance the resistance group from its 1988 founding charter that many view as anti-Semitic. Hamas has often been dismissed in the international arena owing to such stances. The new document is a way to align the movement more broadly with the Palestinian national liberation movement. In the new charter, Hamas focuses on the "racist, anti-human and colonial Zionist project" that has resulted in Israel's occupation of Palestinian land. It reiterates a distinction between Zionism and Judaism and underlines that it is not in conflict with Jews because of their religion. (See Khaled Hroub, "A Newer Hamas? The Revised Charter," JPS 46 [4].) Rather, "Hamas . . . wages a struggle against the Zionists who occupy Palestine." The new charter also stipulates Hamas would accept a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders, without compromising the belief that Palestine exists from "the river to the sea."

[Read the full document.](#)

B2. JAILED PALESTINIAN LEADER MARWAN BARGHOUTI, OP-ED ANNOUNCING PRISONER HUNGER STRIKE, NEW YORK, 16 APRIL 2017

On 16 April 2017, more than 1,000 Palestinians incarcerated in Israeli prisons began a hunger strike led by Marwan Barghouti, the man widely seen as a potential future leader of the Palestinians despite his more than 15 years of imprisonment. The protest, dubbed the Dignity Strike, highlighted the issues of administrative detention (detention without charge or trial, renewable at Israel's will), restrictions on family visits, the use of isolation, and other human rights violations. Barghouti announced the hunger strike with an op-ed in the New York Times coinciding with Prisoners' Day in Palestine. He referenced a report by the prisoner rights group Addameer documenting the fact that Israel has incarcerated about 40 percent of the male Palestinian population since the occupation began in 1967. In his public statement announcing the hunger strike, Barghouti said, "Our chains will be broken before we are, because it is human nature to heed the call for freedom regardless of the cost." (See Palestine Unbound in JPS 46 [4] for more on Barghouti and the Dignity Strike.)

[Read the full op-ed.](#)

B3. PA PM MAHMOUD ABBAS, TRANSLATED INTERVIEW ON SECURITY COORDINATION, DOHA, 16 MARCH 2017 (EXCERPTS)

Below, JPS reproduces abridged excerpts of a long interview Palestinian Authority (PA) president Mahmoud Abbas gave the Qatari newspaper Al-Watan on 16 March 2017. Selected for their importance and timeliness, the excerpts include Abbas's remarks on regional dynamics, security coordination, and the likely role of then incoming U.S. president Donald Trump. The excerpts were translated from Arabic by Dorgham Abusalim, the English online content editor of the Institute for Palestine Studies.

The First Phone Call between Abbas and Trump, and Meeting Jason Greenblatt

Al-Watan: What was the conversation about? And do you think it was a maneuver to marginalize the Palestinian question rather than resolve it?

ABBAS: The head of our intelligence services was invited to visit the United States as soon as Trump entered the White House. We were happy with the meetings he held with various U.S. intelligence and security officers, as it gave us an opportunity to respond to many of the incoming administration's questions. The head of the CIA then came to Ramallah in February and after we talked about our vision for solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict . . . he transmitted our views to the administration. . . . I learned that the U.S. president wanted to speak with me by phone. When we did speak . . . he said he'd heard a lot about me and invited me to come to the White House. In accepting the invitation, I expressed the hope that after 70 years of occupation, he would be able to solve the conflict on the basis of a two-state solution. It wasn't a long conversation but it was a warm one. . . . Shortly afterwards, his special envoy, Jason Greenblatt, came to the region and we had a face-to-face meeting that lasted an hour and a half. Greenblatt met with several other Palestinian officials and was told about the obstacles standing in the way of a solution. My impression was that Trump was serious about trying to solve the conflict and not marginalize Palestine.

Al-Watan: Did Greenblatt mention specific policies or solutions?

ABBAS: Greenblatt did not propose any ideas or policies; rather, he came to listen and transmit our views to President Trump. When I meet with the U.S. president, I believe that we will get answers, as what has been conveyed is sufficient for him to have a clear idea. It is up to him in our view to suggest a suitable solution.

Al-Watan: My understanding is that Trump plans on going back to the drawing board despite the plethora of suggestions, policies, and relevant international decisions. Is that correct?

ABBAS: Yes, I think he will go back to square one with us. He has been quite forthcoming about that. Few officials in the current administration have the requisite political background. [. . .]

The Embassy Relocation

Al-Watan: Are you confident in the role of the White House given Trump's pro-Israel positions, including his commitment to relocating the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem?

ABBAS: Trump announced that he would relocate the embassy on the campaign trail. After he won the election, we sent several messages to Washington underlining that such a move would destroy the peace process. . . . When I'd asked [George W. Bush's] secretary of state Condoleezza Rice for a clear statement of the U.S. position on the occupied territories, her answer was that the occupied Palestinian territories comprised areas Israel occupied in 1967, including the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and Jerusalem. . . . Moving the embassy would mean an implicit recognition of Israel's annexation of Jerusalem, and this contradicts the U.S. position.

Al-Watan: What alternatives do you have in case the U.S. Embassy is relocated to Jerusalem?

ABBAS: I don't want to preempt developments. We have a strategy and alternatives based on developments as they occur. We do not expect the embassy to be relocated any time soon. . . . We made the dangers of such a move known to both Greenblatt and the CIA chief when we met with them.

Two-State Solution

Al-Watan: What is your response to those who say the two-state solution is dead and only waiting to be buried?

ABBAS: [. . .] Settlement activity is indeed destroying the two-state solution, and the topic is something [that] comes up in every discussion with the Americans and everyone else. There is a Palestinian current advocating for a one-state solution, but as far as the leadership is concerned, a two-state solution on the territories occupied in 1967 is the official Palestinian position. The international consensus is that settlement activity is illegal, as evidenced by a host of UN resolutions, including Security Council Resolution 2334 [passed in December 2017].

Regional Dynamics

Al-Watan: How do you explain your exclusion from the secret summit, which has now come to light and was held between [Egypt's president] al-Sisi, King Abdullah [of Jordan], [then U.S. secretary of state] John Kerry, and [Israeli prime minister] Benjamin Netanyahu in Aqaba last year to discuss the Palestinian question?

ABBAS: I do not view the meeting as any kind of conspiratorial action. Relations with Egypt and Jordan are excellent, and it's not possible that these two countries would be conspiring against us or the Palestinian cause. . . . They are free to meet with whomever they wish, and if my presence had been necessary, then I would have been invited. As far as I'm concerned, our doors are open to all, always, especially Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar. . . . I still

don't know why I wasn't invited, but I don't believe there was anything conspiratorial about the meeting. [. . .]

Security Coordination

Al-Watan: The circumstances of Basel al-Araj's death and the arrest of his five friends, which galvanized popular sentiment in Palestine, remain ambiguous. What is your response?

ABBAS: They were all being held in Palestinian prisons, where we detained them for their own protection as they were wanted by Israel. But their relatives told us that didn't want our protection and insisted that we release them. We required them to sign a waiver, saying as much. After we released them, the Israelis killed Basel and arrested his friends.

Al-Watan: So, am I to understand that security coordination was not responsible for Basel's death?

ABBAS: Security coordination is something else and has nothing to do with what happened to Basel. We have formally decided to revoke security coordination, but reserve the right to choose when, which is a decision for the PLO to take in consultation with me. . . . Many people have criticized my stance in favor of security coordination on Facebook and elsewhere.

Al-Watan: But Basel was killed by Israeli occupation forces in areas under your control, a fact widely considered to mean that Israel does not respect your authority, and views you as a security subcontractor.

ABBAS: Israel violates all Palestinian areas despite our commitment to security coordination. Israeli soldiers pass by my own house almost every day. This is an occupation, and we are a people and a state under occupation. Sixty percent of our land, designated as Area C, is under Israeli military control, and Israel violates the remaining 40 percent of what should by rights be under Palestinian control.

[Read the full transcript of the original Arabic interview.](#)

B4. ESCWA EXEC. SECY. RIMA KHALAF, RESIGNATION IN PROTEST OF WITHDRAWAL OF UN REPORT ON ISRAELI APARTHEID, NEW YORK, 18 MARCH 2017

Rima Khalaf, the executive secretary of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), resigned her position on 17 March 2017 after UN secretary-general António Guterres—under heavy pressure from Israel and the United States—asked her to revoke a commissioned report that found that Israeli policies were tantamount to apartheid. The report, “Israeli Practices towards the Palestinian People and the Question of Apartheid,” was released on 15 March and immediately caused a firestorm of controversy because it presented evidence of apartheid “beyond a reasonable doubt.” While she recognized that the pressure on the UN left it with little choice in the matter, Khalaf refused to revoke the report, choosing instead to leave her position because she was a “decent human being” and believed in upholding human rights by speaking “truth to power.” (See Update on Conflict and Diplomacy in JPS 46 [4] for more.)

[Read the letter.](#)

B5. PALESTINIAN YOUTH MOVEMENT, OPEN LETTER TO PLO LEADERS ON BASEL AL-ARAJ KILLING, 24 MARCH 2017

On 6 March 2017, Israeli forces killed Basel al-Araj, 31, a prominent writer and activist in an emerging group of young Palestinian thinkers calling for the revitalization of the Palestinian national movement. An outspoken critic of both the Israeli occupation and the PA, al-Araj advocated for grassroots struggles against both (see Update on Conflict and Diplomacy and Palestine Unbound in JPS 46 [4] for more on al-Araj). On the night of 6 March, Israeli forces stormed a home where al-Araj had been in hiding in al-Bireh, and assassinated him.

One year earlier, the PA had arrested al-Araj and five others; the group went on hunger strike to protest their mistreatment at the hands of PA security forces who released them several days later. Al-Araj's case caused widespread criticism of the PA's security coordination with Israel.

In response to al-Araj's death, the Palestinian Youth Movement, a decentralized, independent grassroots movement of young Palestinians in Palestine and in the diaspora with a large presence in the United States, as well as its supporters, addressed a letter to PA leaders denouncing security coordination with Israel. "We, Palestinian youth of the Diaspora, feel compelled to register in the historical record our anger, pain and distress caused by both our occupier and by you as its gatekeeper," they wrote.

[Read the letter.](#)

ISRAEL

C. AKEVOT INSTITUTE FOR ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT RESEARCH, 1967 MEMO REVEALING EARLIEST HOME DEMOLITION IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES, TEL AVIV, 15 MARCH 2017

In what is perhaps the first recorded incident of home demolitions used as collective punishment against Palestinians in the occupied territories, a 1967 memorandum of understanding by members of the Israeli Foreign Ministry describes the expulsions of Palestinians from the Gaza Strip and the demolition of several homes in response to the explosion of a land mine there. The document was discovered and released to the public by the Akevot Institute for Israeli-Palestinian Conflict Research, which is dedicated to the documentation of human rights violations in the context of the conflict.

The 15 June 1967 memorandum was written by Avner Arazi and Yaakov Avnon and recorded a conversation held with Lieut. Col. Haim Gaon in Gaza, in which Gaon recounted that following the explosion of a land mine, Israeli forces had tracked footprints from the site of the explosion to a nearby refugee camp. When Israeli soldiers demanded that the inhabitants denounce those responsible for laying the mine, they were met by 110 men who claimed membership of the Palestinian Liberation Army and refused to identify the perpetrators. After standing their ground for three hours, the men were taken to the Sinai and left to fend for themselves in the desert. Additionally, the Israeli military blew up eight homes inside the refugee camp. According to Akevot,

the memorandum may be the first documented record of Israel using home demolitions as collective punishment in the occupied Palestinian territories.

[Read the full document.](#)

UNITED STATES

D. BLACK4PALESTINE, PETITION IN SUPPORT OF PALESTINIAN PRISONER HUNGER STRIKE, NEW YORK, 26 APRIL 2017

On 26 April 2017, Black4Palestine, a U.S. network of black activists, artists, academics, and faith-based groups and individuals in solidarity with the Palestinian struggle for human rights, released a statement of solidarity with Palestinian political prisoners observing the Dignity Strike to protest inhumane conditions and Israel's use of administrative detention (indefinite imprisonment without charge or trial), among other things. The statement is significant because it emphasizes commonalities in the struggle for collective liberation between Palestine and the black movement for civil rights in the United States.

"We urge our people to understand that prisons are institutions of social control against poor and oppressed communities and a way of suppressing movements based in human rights in the U.S. and Palestine. The largest purveyors of violence and crime (the war machines of the U.S. and Israel) remain free, while we are imprisoned for trying to exist or resist in the violent world that they create," the statement says.

The document also mentions the use of force-feeding, both in Israeli prisons and at Guantanamo Bay, the U.S. military prison for War on Terror detainees, saying that the UN recognizes the practice as "torture." The UN Committee against Torture classifies force-feeding as "ill-treatment in violation of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment." (For more on Black4Palestine, see Documents and Source Material in JPS 45 [2].)

[Read the full statement.](#)

RECOMMENDED REPORTS

R. KANTOR CENTER, ANTI-SEMITISM WORLDWIDE 2016: GENERAL ANALYSIS DRAFT, TEL AVIV, 23 APRIL 2017

The Antisemitism Worldwide 2016 General Analysis draft, based on research by the Moshe Kantor Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry and the Moshe Kantor Database on Antisemitism and Racism, looks at incidents in specific locations, such as the former Soviet Union, Europe, the United States, Central and South America, and the Middle East.

The study finds that in 2016, violent incidents of anti-Semitism decreased by 12 percent, from 410 in 2015 to 361. Violent and nonviolent anti-Semitic incidents taken together also decreased worldwide, except at U.S. college campuses where incidents increased 45 percent, according to the

study. The Kantor Center, which considers the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement anti-Semitic, calls U.S. campuses a “hotbed for anti-Semitism.” This characterization likely accounts for the sharp rise in its count of anti-Semitic acts on U.S. campuses, where the BDS movement is growing rapidly.

The report theorizes that the worldwide decrease in anti-Semitism may be related to the fact Israel had no “military confrontations” with its neighbors to the north or south in the year elapsed. The report also discusses the Working Definition of Antisemitism (WDA) and uses the Anti-Semitism Awareness Act of 2016, passed by the Senate, to argue that the WDA is still viable. “The U.S. Senate approved the ‘Antisemitism Awareness Act’ as a tool against the rampant antisemitism on campuses, based on a WDA adopted earlier by the State Department,” the report claims. It also touches on U.S. president Trump as a lightning rod for the anti-Semitic behavior of others.

The report also takes issue with UNESCO’s use of the terms Haram al-Sharif and al-Buraq Plaza instead of the Temple Mount and Wailing Wall, respectively, in its resolution condemning Israeli actions and abuses at the contested site. It alleges that UNESCO’s designation incited widespread anti-Semitism among Palestinians who, along with many Arab writers and thinkers, hailed the UNESCO resolution. (See Update on Conflict and Diplomacy in JPS 46 [4] for more.)

[Read the full report.](#)